

ROCK ISLAND ARGUS (IL)
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To CIA: Keep hands off newsmen

American editors, who were assured that the Central Intelligence Agency would never again recruit newsmen for intelligence work except under the most extraordinary circumstances, were shocked to hear CIA Chief Stansfield Turner tell them that he had recruited three newsmen for such work.

He was even surprised by their indignant reaction. Although circumstances actually prevented his use of the newsmen he recruited, he said he saw nothing wrong with the practice and implied that the editors' unwillingness to cooperate was unpatriotic.

This was amazing in view of the way a congressional committee cracked down on this practice in 1977 and the solemn CIA

pledge given at that time that it would not "enter into any relationships" with journalists.

While only a few journalists ever served the CIA (for convenient side money), the press as a whole would be discredited by the practice. As the late Justice Hugo Black once observed, the Framers of the U.S. Constitution regarded the press as one of those agencies whose role was to "improve our society and keep it free."

If the security of the nation were at stake — a chance, for instance, to break the enemy's code during a war or impending war — no one should refuse a call to serve the CIA or any other branch of the national government. No such situation exists today.